



★ ★ ★ ★ ★
★ ★ POEMS ★ ★
DRAMATIC & LYRICAL
★ BY ★
CLIFFORD BA3C





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The book cover features a decorative border. At the top, three birds are shown in flight, wings spread, arranged in a slight arc. On the left and right sides, two more birds are shown in flight, facing towards the center. At the bottom, there are stylized, swirling wave-like patterns that resemble clouds or water, framing the text.

THE
ORPHEUS SERIES
IX

POEMS
DRAMATIC & LYRICAL
BY
CLIFFORD BAX

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*

A quella che emparadisa la mia mente.

*

THE SCHOOL OF PLATO.

Written after seeing the great fresco "L'Ecole de Platon" by Jean Delville.

BEFORE this beauty wrought by human hands,
By spirit more than human dreamed and wrought,
I feel as one whom happy winds have brought
Safely to rest among enchanted lands :
I feel myself go deeper than all thought,
Enfolded by the painter-poet's dream
Until the moan of multitudes oppressed,
The roaring cities and the mad unrest
Wherein to-day we travail, do but seem
Shadows, and this that now mine eyes behold
So living, so intense, that while I gaze
I seem to watch unfold
Some long-forgotten life I lived of old
In beauty-worshipping Athenian days.

And now with lowered lids I contemplate
My vision clear as in a crystal's heart,
For spell-bound by the master's magic art
I see it all as one who coming late
Stands from the rest a little space apart :
The sage, white-robed, upon the marble seat,
And in the sombre shadow of dark trees
Reclined upon the flower-lit lawn at ease
The naked Grecian youths about his feet
Or standing deep in thought with idle grace

Listening there all hushed : a little throng
Pure-spirited and strong,
Poets and athletes, runners of the race,
Yet ardent lovers of the lyre and song.

They lie deep-shadowed. Overhead the sun
Burns, and the long arcades are hushed with heat :
And in this quiet verdurous retreat
The long hot hours have mingled and made one
Silence of noon with beauty summer-sweet.
Only through leagues of trembling atmosphere
Float the faint sea-sighs and the soft sea-moan,
And over their continual undertone
Flows on the voice of Plato deep and clear,
And while he gently turns from each to each
His words like wings of many colours wrought
Uplift the soul they teach
Upon their very majesty of speech
To clearer comprehension of his thought.

What is it that he speaks ? Is it perchance
How having felt the sorrows of mankind
He made a world within his dreaming mind,
A flawless world, in noble ignorance
How long the souls of men should yet be blind?
Or does he tell of that divine desire,
That godlike love which has no taint of lust
But through the mortal shape that is of dust
Seeks and attains the spirit that is of fire ?
Or haply how the soul has many shapes,
Even as Thamyras in the olden tale
Became a nightingale,
And after many lives at last escapes
Free, to soar sunward cleaving veil on veil !

Listen : draw near, as I, not seen or heard.

Rest on the grass, and while your limbs and hair
Feel the warm touch of sunlight and soft air,
Be hushed and hearken : he whose lightest word
Is fraught with beauty speaks : " And coming there
The seer saw the unborn souls of men
Stoop at the river Lethe where they drank,
And now, as often, slowly earthward sank
Each to the life appointed him." And then,
Lifting a stray of hair from off his brow,
He murmurs : " Thus the web of fate is spun,
And thus while time shall run,
Being impure we lose ourselves as now
Among the many shapes of what is One."

And yet, alas, the stately Grecian sage
Died long ago, and ah with what regret
I see the very gardens where we met
So long ago and in so fair an age
To hear the voice that vibrates in us yet.
These things are gone : the ships upon the sea,
White-sailed, far-off ; the flowers we used to touch,
The lawns and colonnades we loved so much,
All these are vanished utterly, and we,
We too have changed and here once more behold
The selfsame world ; we contemplate again
The hearts of living men
Not happier than they were in times of old,
Not wiser, not more beautiful, than then.

For where is Beauty now ? With hearts unclean
And sick with shame we hide away, we ban
The fair and holy form of maid or man
And all that beauty wastes away unseen
Which like the spring could only last a span,

Yet were it always, like the flowers and trees,
 Openly seen and loved, and free to feel
 The air, the sunlight, surely might it heal
Our leper souls of half their foul disease :
 And even so men shield away from sight
Their nobler selves ; dishonour and disclaim
The poet's heart, the flame
 That burns within them still ; put out the light
And veil the splendour of their souls for shame.

Nor are we wiser now, for all life long
 We strive against each other, while the sweat
 And dust of all our struggle blind us yet.
Still are the weak down-trampled by the strong,
 Nation by neighbouring nation overset,
And still from pole to pole the world is torn
 With bloody wars, with harsh inhuman strife,
 Albeit above this wreck of earthly life
The stars, as if in sorrow, not in scorn,
 Gaze and rebuke us ; call on us to rise
And hushing all our discord here to make
Life as a quiet lake,
 That all men, having peace, may lift their eyes
Up to eternal things and thus awake.

For now we sleep, and in that fevered sleep,
 Despite the dominance of wealth and war
 And speed insane, forever more and more
Within our secret selves we can but weep,
 For in us now as never heretofore
Burns a desire to find the hidden springs
 Of all the world's unhappiness and pain,
 And in the darkness here to hold again
Some certain knowledge of eternal things.
 We seek a sign in heaven. We look for one

Whose soul shall be a lamp for us to light
Things that are shut from sight,
Till Life shall seem as Day whose golden sun
Passes in Death and all the stars of Night.

O godlike voice of wisdom ! Master-Sage !
Break from the dream that binds thee now ; return
Here to this earth and all the hearts that yearn.
The world is waiting, worn : redeem this age,—
Ah quench the bitter thirst with which we burn ;
And with thy wisdom make us rëaspire
To all things high and beautiful and strong ;
Bring back the joy that we have lost so long,—
Teach us to love, and with thy spirit of fire
Cleanse the whole world ;—or if this may not be,
Gather about thyself some ardent few
That seek the Good, the True,
As in those garden-lawns that here we see
And once, two thousand years ago, we knew.

*

WOODLAND WISDOM.

Nothing, truly, but thine own Willing, Hearing, and Seeing . . . do hinder thee from coming to the Supersensual State.—BOEHME.

*Lovely as petals afloat at the brim of a bowl
Stars will shine in a pool if the pool be still,
And ah there were never a sorrow to trouble the soul
If only the lore of the world were forgotten at will.*

But I, I had sorrowed for man ; I had clouded away
The vision that is not of time in the dust of a day.

And then in the hush of a great green forest, alone,
I uttered the cry of my heart and the song that I wrought,
Falling again on the soul as a magical sleep,
Slowly enchanted me over the verge of the known,
Over the bound of my being, the limits of thought,
And out of myself I arose ; I entered the deep.

Ah for a little with all the delight of a boy
Allured in the heat of the noon to the cold of the sea,
Wearied of man and ashamed of the world I stood,
Worshipping God with the old wild wondering joy,
Healing my heart with the beauty of flower or tree,
Cleansing the dust of my life in the life of the wood,

When suddenly harebells glimmered around me, seen
As a sapphire mist in a maze of environing green,

And lo, as a water will mirror the flight of a bird,
Wandering over the spirit their beauty awoke
A sense and a vision of days that are over and gone,
In the dawn of the world when afar in the forest were heard
The dance and the hymn of a joyous, a beautiful folk
Praising the fruit of the Earth and adoring the Sun !

Ah me, as I looked on the blue little bells I began
To remember the joy of the world in the childhood of man ;

*And when from the forest again to the open I passed,
Laughing I said in my soul " It is folly to grieve ;
The spirit of man shall remember itself at the last ;
The beauty of dawn shall return in the beauty of eve."*

*

AVE.

(To E. W. D.)

*O that I now could lose again
Or cleanse away with tears
The foolish lore I learned of men,
The dust of all my years!*

*Away with ocean, earth and air
I, too, alone and wild,
Should feel the Great One near me there,
A wonder-hearted child.*

So did I often ponder, caught
Within the fast control
Of those who cloud in worldly thought
The heaven-illuminated soul.

But when you came you set me free,
You gave me life anew,
For all I sought in Earth and Sea
I found at last in you.

In you the joy of dawn and noon,
The fervent evening-light,
The tender sun-reflecting moon,
The starry breadth of night ;

And something more they could not give,
That only kinship can,
The mighty joy of us who live,
The bond of man with man.

*

TO MARCIA.

THIS outward beauty that I see
As you lie back in shadow there
Is hardly more yourself to me
Than is the lovely robe you wear.

We can but greet from far away
Yet through the veils that intervene
I feel your beauty day by day
Though you yourself I have not seen.

And yet as day by day has passed
In commune over things divine,
Your soul unwittingly has cast
An image of herself on mine.

I need but think of you to wake
 Within my heart a sense of peace,
Of majesty that naught can shake,
 Of tenderness that cannot cease.

For just as on a glittering night
 We cleave the senses' close control
And soar out in ecstatic flight,
 So is it when I seek your soul.

And in my memories thereof
 A clearer likeness can I trace
To that within you which I love
 Than in the beauty of your face.

For now that all the worlds of dream
 Divide our spirits far apart
I can but know you as you seem
 Reflected there within my heart.

I can but know you now within
 When, putting all this beauty by,
With eager soul I strain to win
 The lovely self that shall not die ;

And yet as when deep tender notes
Of music touch the listening ear
The soul draws breath and lives and floats
In that rare inner atmosphere,

So too I hope to gain afar
The utmost joy that God may give,
To know you as in truth you are
And in that beauty breathe and live.

*

AN INTERIOR.

(TO G. N. AND M. V D., DRESDEN, AUGUST, 1907.)

THE little flower-set window-square
Was filled with sapphire-coloured bloom ;
A coolness clove the darkening air,
And we in that familiar room -
Heard lightly cast along the pane
The javelins of the August rain.

And then a perfume sad and sweet,
And our harmonious quietude,
And all the day's remembered heat,
Awoke in me that wistful mood
Wherein our own life does but seem
As life in Babylon—a dream.

I saw that round the table there
All three of us were deep in thought,
And how within your eyes and hair
The golden candlelight was caught,
And how it made your shadows fall
Across the pictures on the wall.

To what enchanted inner cave
Your spirits passed I could not know,
But as a diver cleaves a wave
And plunges down the heaven below
I sought the One, the hidden One
Whose mighty soul conceived the sun.

And as a child may dance and laugh
All naked by the rose-lit sea,
I flung the rags of reason off,
I let my soul awhile be free,
And saw the cosmic pageant wrought,
Upon the inner Space of thought.

I saw the glow, the roaring flame,
The suns and worlds and all that is,
Magnificent as first they came
Breathed outward by the Heart of Bliss,
And all dissolve again in death
An Inhalation of His Breath :

I saw those wingèd lords of love,
Too mighty yet for mortal birth,
Who gazing as they towered above
On us their shadow-selves of earth
Had waited since the world began
As in the child awaits the man.

Then something broke my reverie,—
A word, a look,—nor can I tell
How strange it was, how sad, to see
The old sweet life I knew so well,
The little life we live to-day
That shall so soon have flowed away !

*

IN A STUDIO.

(STUDIES FROM THE LIFE.)

Souls are lessened by their union with bodies : bodies are glorified by their union with souls.—JALALUD'-DIN RŪMI.

I.

THE drowsy long-drawn afternoon
Is heavy now with heat of June :
 Across the open window floats
A far-off worn Italian tune.

And on the little stage a fair
Full-bosomed girl with banded hair,
 Low slipping off her gown of silk,
Sets all her body's beauty bare.

Ah motionless and white she stands
With lifted face and lifted hands,—
 A dryad murmuring to the moon,
A sea-nymph on the foamy sands ;

As round me here in magic-wise
The crescent rows of pictures rise :
 We hear, outside, the sleepy birds
Or sudden buzzing of blue flies.

But now the joy of summer, sought
So long, has vanished out of thought,
For on the naked form I gaze
Till all that once I loved is nought.

I knew how fair the green earth is :
I loved her half-lit mysteries,
But in the whole enchanted world
I found no beauty such as this !

O slender vase! O dainty-set
Warm, living, Grecian statuette,
Well-named of yore the Song of God,
In thee all heaven and earth are met !

For lit with joy the spirit sees
A glimpse of God in flowers or trees,
In cloud or wave or hill, but here
An image holier than all these.

And since more beauty none shall find
I muse with glad and lowly mind
Before the thinnest of all veils
That cloud the One Great Soul behind.

Nor can I marvel, now, that we
In wiser ages bowed the knee
To images of powers divine
One half so beautiful as she,

For I too, sitting silent, seemed
As one reborn or one redeemed,
Beholding there in human shape
More beauty than my heart had dreamed.

II.

Again we see her fresh and sweet,
A form unflecked,
Her stately figure drawn erect
With joined feet.

Her hands are hid behind the fair
And queenly head,
And half her breast is overspread
With shining hair.

Nor would I now do aught but gaze
In hope to cast
Upon the soul a joy will last
For many days.

But ah, the pain of beauty! Tears
Begin to rise
Within my over-happy eyes
As not for years.

It is as when in April hours
We watch, asway
Upon the blue of heaven a spray
Of almond-flowers ;

As when in woodland labyrinths,
In early spring,
We find a little shaken ring
Of hyacinths.

For so I see her standing white
And shapely-limbed
Until my heart is overbrimmed
With sheer delight.

I would the world were lovely yet
With all the grace
That I behold a little space
Before me set.

So poor the gain, so large the cost,
For which we sold
The loveliness life had of old,
The freedom lost !

God made of beauty the soul's wine,
Of her the cup
Wherefrom we drink and rising up
Grow half-divine.

Awhile I lived as they who breathed
The air of dawn,
And even now,—the dream withdrawn,
The splendour sheathed,—

My memory of her seems a flower,
But one and all
The petals of the tulip fall
That bloomed an hour.

It is as though, anigh me set,
A censer hung
Whereof the odour softly-swung
Is round me yet,

And even though it fade afar
It cannot die,
For in my soul I see on high
A new-lit star !

III.

Pale as a goddess wrought of stone
With tinted breasts and coloured hair
Above us all she sits alone
In silence on the cushioned throne.

And softly shadowed, softly lit,
She knows her body smooth and fair
But being a child she knows no whit
What world-old mystery shines in it.

She knows not how the hair of gold,
The slender sides and girlish limbs,
That we with aweless eyes behold
Were counted sacrosanct of old ;

Nor how to Her it was we came
With dances, with impassioned hymns,
With long processions, lamps aflame,
And cryings of her hallowed name !

But I, O fair one, I discern
(Far-sinking down the mystic mood)
How here again with hearts that burn
The long-dead multitudes return ;

How, like dim shadows, over thee
Wing'd Isis and Astarte brood,
Assyrian Ashtaroth, and she
Who rose full-blossomed from the sea.

For thou art more than what men deem :
The symbols of thy body, wrought
In likeness of the starry scheme
Interpret all the cosmic dream,

And He who set the stars to roll
Has made thee as a lamp for thought,
A little lamp whereby the soul
May faintly shadow forth the whole,—

As I, who pondering now on these
Thy milky breasts and maiden womb,
Like one who falls upon his knees
Adoring what he dimly sees,

Behold with reverent heart how once
God woke the ever-virgin gloom,
And lo, in æon-long response
Came forth a host of burning suns !

*

THE BLUE SEA.

Son, when thou art quiet and silent, then art thou as God was before Nature and Creature; thou art that which God then was; thou art that whereof He made thy Nature and Creature; then thou hearest and seest even with that wherewith God Himself saw and heard in thee, before ever thine own Willing or thine own Seeing began.—BOEHME (The Supersensual Life).

SHALL we make a song of sighs
Now that all the great earth lies
(All the seas and all the lands)
As it were between our hands ?

Oh that we might have sailed among
Those who when the world was young
Left the citted shores of Greece
To sail for the Golden Fleece.
Ah with what joy, what boundless hope
Had we toiled with oar and rope
Day by day below the sun
When the world was known of none ;
Or while the stars and moon arose
How we all had gathered close
About the dark, divinely fair
Orpheus with his blowing hair,
Till as we heard that voice and lyre
Echoing back the heart's-desire
We should have known that far away
Islands of enchantment lay !

Now that East and West are known
Where, oh where is wonder flown ?
Now that man is worldly-wise
Shall we make a song of sighs ?
Ah no, no.

Fold your hands and close your eyes !
Let the inward-gathered will
Bid the waves of thought be still,
And surely you shall find them soon
Silent as the sea in June.
Then, oh then far down the dark,
Like an ever-glowing spark,
You shall find your soul anew
And all heaven come back to you :
See the very flame of thought
Over which the earth was wrought,
Worlds of glory lovelier much
Than the sphere we see or touch,
Flowering vales that none have trod,
And a mountain-path to God.

Close your eyes and fold your hands,
You shall pass to wonderlands ;
Fold your hands and close your eyes,
You shall wake in Paradise.

*

REVERIE.

OFTEN when the lamps are lit
On a winter's eve at five
And I hear the rain-drops drive
At the window where I sit,—
When I may not longer read,
Then, I know not why, but then
Though I watch the world of men
Yet I seem alone indeed.

Had I only when a child
Lived afar beside the sea,
As the cloud in heaven, free,
As the very sea-gull, wild,
All day long I would have run

In and out among the caves,
Or have whispered with the waves
Or have spoken to the sun :
I had lifted high my hands
With my long hair blown behind
As I danced upon the sands
With the wind.
All day long the sun above
Like a brother would have smiled
And the sea, a sister-child,
Would have played with me for love ;
And at sunset, from the shade
Of a crevice, closely curled
I had watched the moving world
That my golden brother made
Till the rippled colours died
And the star of evening shone
And for all the beauty gone
I had hid my face and cried.

Then at night I should have crept
Down the stairway, past the door,
Softly to the moonlit shore
Where at sundown I had wept,
Not, as in the day, to dance
But that lying still and white
I might overwhelm the night,
Flowing outward in a trance
Till the murmurs of the sea
Were as voices in the moon
Or a mighty mystery-rune
Echoed in the depth of me.

Had I dwelled beside the sea
 When a little child ; alas,
 Had it only come to pass
As it seems it could not be,
I were no more lonely then
 At the fading of the sun
 Like a spirit known of none
In the busy world of men :
I should hear the sound of home,
 Of the home I cannot find,
 In the crooning of the wind,
In the whispers of the foam,—
I should feel beyond the whole,
 Through the star-wrought veils above,
 As it were the Heart of Love,
The Belovèd of the Soul.

*

PAGANISM.

At rest on a heathery hill at the close of a day
I gaze at the sunset-colours afloat on the sea,
And all that is mortal within me is burning away,
And I am a spirit, immortal, joyous, and free!

And oh I rejoice, for the dawn of an age is begun,
I rejoice, for I see, as it were having risen from sleep,
An olympian charioteer in the disc of the sun,
A host of the children of God in the waves of the deep!

*

LIGHTNING.

OR ever the moon or the moon-born earth
Or the seven brides of the sun had birth
I, now lock'd in the body I wear,
Was whirled along in the cloven air.

Away in the fathomless deeps I shone
For the robe that I wore was a flaming sun,
And age on age as it melted away
Went by me brief as a single day.

And I heard above and below and round
The chant of a myriad stars resound,
And ever the song as it rose became
A sunset-ocean of pulsing flame.

And I too, swept in the radiant throng,
Uttered the glory of life in a song,
A song tossed up as the foam of the sea
For the joy, for the rapture only to be!

O passion of life that consumed me once!
O choric hymn of the burning suns!
It is all gone by, it has vanished again,
And I am a man in the world of men.

But ah for a moment, felt or seen
As a breath, as an odour intense and keen,
As a message written in letters of flame,
To the musing spirit a memory came ;

And far, far-off as the cry of a wave
Is heard in the mouth of a blinding cave
I heard as I stood at the mouth of the soul
The chant of the great Sun-Riders roll.

*

ECHO AND NARCISSUS.

SCENE. (*Twilight in a Vale of Arcady. A few trees in the foreground; a clear pool to the left, lying at the foot of a green slope. Narcissus, clad in a garment of light colour, is asleep under the boughs. Two Dryads begin to call each other from within their trees.*)

1st Dryad. Murmuring-leaves! . . . Murmuring-leaves!
. . . I am awake. (Silence.)
where is no need any longer to hide us now,
For the flaming sun is drowned at last in the
lake,
And over the valley the cool of the twilight
falls.

2nd Dryad. Who is it sighs my name? Is it thou? Is it
thou?
Ah, when will the sun go down? . . .
Who is it calls?

1st Dryad. It is I, little sister . . .
(A brief pause.)

2nd Dryad. Lover-of-Violets!

1st Dryad. Yea?

2nd Dryad. Art thou sure there is no last lingering light?

1st Dryad. Sure: for the breath of the soil is hotter by
day,
And all my violet-leaves are shut for the night.

2nd Dryad. Go thou first, and let me follow, I pray,
For I have a fear of something,—I know not
why—
And thou, thou art older and always braver
than I.
Do not be rash! Remember, even a breath,
A single dart, of the sun can achieve our death.

1st Dryad. (*Creeping out.*)
Come forth, Murmuring-leaves.

2nd Dryad. Is it all well?

1st Dryad. Only I hear in the valley the shepherd's bell,
And, ah the caress of the wind is upon my
hair!

2nd Dryad. (*Creeping out.*)
The souls of a myriad flowers are afloat in the
air,
And, oh in the dusk how delicately they smell!

1st Dryad. Not one of them all would I lose, but mostly I
love
The violet-ring that my own tree trembles
above.

2nd Dryad. Oh, how I wish they would also cluster to
mine,—
I have not any!

1st Dryad. But thou art a little tree still.
After a year, when a leafier shadow is thine,
Then they will gather to thee,—I am certain
they will.

2nd Dryad. I will be glad for thy sake. It is foolish to weep.
How many hast thou sheltering under thy
boughs ?

1st Dryad. Ever so many ! I know they are set so deep
That when I begin to consider them all I drowse
And ere I have numbered a half I am fallen
asleep.

To-day at the noon I thought I should break
my heart

For one at the rim of the circle was growing
apart,—

Oh, full in the fire of the passionate sun he
stood

Nor could I throw him a shadow, try as I
would,

For the heat of the air was fierce and the wind
was low—

Ah, Murmuring-leaves, I am afraid he is dead !

2nd Dryad. They joy in the sun, remember. Where does
he grow ?

1st Dryad. Here at the edge,—oh look, he is drooping his
head.

2nd Dryad. He is all burned.

1st Dryad. Nay, nay, he will open anew
If only thou gather me swiftly a handful of dew.

*(The 2nd Dryad runs into the moonlight,
shaking the grass.)*

Oh brother, behold our sorrow !

West wind, have pity on these,

For thou, as I know, dost love them,—

The blue flowers under the trees.

Come then at the dawn to-morrow,

Incline the grasses above them,

Flutter my foliage over each one
When I shall have hid from the sun !

2nd Dryad. Lover-of-Violets, look ! Look there,—in the shade !

1st Dryad. Nothing I see. What is it ?—Thou art afraid.

2nd Dryad. Alas, alas, he is moving. Utter no word !

1st Dryad. (*Joining the 2nd.*)

What is it then ? a serpent ? a wounded bird ?
Show it to me !

2nd Dryad. We are lost. He will burn us away.—
Thou, thou too art afraid ! Look there, look there !

1st Dryad. Why, it is only a wandering faun.

2nd Dryad. Oh nay,
That is no faun. Do not go closer, I pray !

1st Dryad. (*Examining Narcissus.*)

Oh, he is beautiful ! Oh, he is tall, he is fair !
He will not hurt us for, see ! there are flowers
in his hair.

2nd Dryad. Is he asleep ?

1st Dryad. Asleep : there is nothing to fear,
For whatever he be the spirit within is afar
And only his body is lying beautiful here.

2nd Dryad. Is he the soul of a cloud, or the soul of a star ?
Nay, he is surely a god, a brother of Pan !

1st Dryad. I am not sure, but seeing how lovely they are—
All of that race—I think that he may be a man.

2nd Dryad. What is a man, then ? Is he a god or as we ?
And how can we know him ? how art thou sure
it is he ?

1st Dryad. Only I know what the wind has said in the
night,
And he, having travelled the whole world,
cannot be wrong:
He told me that Man is a being of beauty and
might
Who was ere the stars in the deep blue broke
into song.

2nd Dryad. (*Impressed.*)
And are they as free as the wind, and have
they wings?

1st Dryad. They are profoundly wise, and they know all
things:
They are akin to the gods, and greater than
we,—
Are not the limbs of him lovelier, even, than
ours?
Lay but thy hand on the gold-brown bark of
his tree,—
It is fairer to touch than the bloom of the wild-
wood flowers!

(*abruptly*) I am so happy because he is fair! Come thou,
Thou too, Murmuring-leaves,—we will kiss his
brow.

2nd Dryad. Oh, he is waking!

1st Dryad. Ah me, what have I done?
Hide, hide thyself,—we are lost if only he sees,
For here is a powerful spirit, a child of the sun!
Into the trees, oh sister, into the trees!
(*They run away, and vanish "into the trees."*)

Narcissus. (*Having woken.*)
O joy of human life! O glad new birth
Down from the dream-world once again to
earth!

Like a fair friend is earth, and ah, like love
The always-deepening heaven that broods
above.

I know not which is the happier, life or
death,

For now I drink up joy with every breath
And with each movement of my body seem
Buoyant of heart as when I flew in dream.

(rising)

O all divine invisible great Powers,
For deep soft colour and perfume of the
flowers,

For moon and sun, valleys and hills, for these
Waters, and the wind-music of tall trees,
For the whole wonder-vision whereon I gaze,
I, coming out of sleep, send you my praise,
Yea, give you all the love that a man may give
Seeing it is so sweet only to live!

Nay, I believe there is no bound at all
To man's delight unless his heart be small,
For if the soul love and be loved as mine
All life becomes a bowl of crimson wine,
A rain of blossom, beauty on beauty cast,
Until the spirit be faint for joy at last.
So sweet it is to hear now all day long
The memory of my lover like a song
Murmured within my soul. O heart of me
Long have I slept and have desire of thee!
Where art thou? Echo! Soon, ah very soon,
We shall be laughing together as at noon,
Here in the dusk,—nay, is not that her cry?
Echo!

Echo.

(Without.)

Yea, yea, beloved, it is I!

(Entering.)

Dear one,—Narcissus—I have brought thee
flowers

Lovelier than any in all this vale of ours
And oh the pity that neither I nor thou
Had come to this fair part of it till now !
For all the valley-flowers are known to me,—
They were my lovers—but these are different.
See,

The delicate colours in them float and change
Like water flushed with sundown. Are they
not strange ?

I felt as if they called me with their scent
Up on those little hills, and as I went
I saw how while the air was darkening, they
Shone with their own fire down the sloping way :
So then I kneeled among them here or there
And bring them now to thee.

Narcissus.

They are very fair,—
It must be that to-day some laughing god
Went by and left them blossoming where he
trod—

I never saw such petals.

Echo.

O, to be
Again so near, so very near to thee !
Thou art so beautiful, Narcissus,—yea
Thou art as beautiful as the birth of day ;
Thine eyes, oh they are deep as the deep night
And this thy hair seems as a cloud of light,—
As a tall flower art thou.

Narcissus.

What then of thee ?

Echo.

Wert thou two souls thou wouldst not gaze on
me.

Narcissus.

I think thou art my second soul !

Echo.

(*Through her tears.*) Alas !
I am to thee a very cloudy glass !

Narcissus. Myself I know not, but I know thee fair.
Echo. Nay, I am darkness—even as the robe I wear.
Narcissus. We love the light but love not less the shade.
Echo. Narcissus—oh my beloved—I am afraid!
Narcissus. Wherefore afraid? We should be otherwise.
Echo. Because thou art so wonderful in mine eyes!
Narcissus. If it be so, should it not make thee glad?
Echo. Always when I look long at thee I am sad.
Narcissus. But why, but why? Have I then made thee
weep?
Echo. I know thy love is a gift I may not keep.
Narcissus. Time, time will show thee thou art wrong.
Echo. So fair
Is he I love I know not how I dare.
All that I have is thine,—whatever grace
Of youth may light my body or my face,
But oh that I were tenfold lovelier yet
For then I should not fear thou wouldst forget;
Then might I haply bring thee—who can tell?—
A beauty twin to thine.
Narcissus. Thou knowest well
That I did never love till yesterday
When thou wert lying near the brook at play,
And having found thee, having loved thee so,
What need have I for others?
Echo. This I know,—
That I am fair—albeit my limbs are frail—
As any shepherdess in this green vale,
But all my girlish beauty when I run
To thee fades as a cloud into the sun.

I cannot hope that thou wilt love me long,—
Rather shall I be like a happy song
Which at the noon is fashioned but at fall
Of evening is remembered not at all ;
And yet, and yet, so do I love thy face,
I am content if but a little space
I give thee any gladness, any delight,
Or seem but one hour beautiful in thy sight.
Yea, 'tis enough, and I will cry no more.

Narcissus. Nay, thou shouldst never weep. If aught be
mine,

It is not greater than this gift of thine
For thou hast given to me a double spring !

Echo. My darling, I am so glad if I may bring
Aught for thy joy,—however small the boon.
Perhaps thou art hungry now ? for since the
noon

Thou hast been wandering with our sheep.
Near by

Honey and milk and many fruits have I.
Let us go then, and in this haunt of ours
We will have supper, lying among the flowers.

Narcissus. Better that I should bring them—I had forgot.
Rest for a little !

Echo. Nay, thou knowest not
Where I have laid them, . . .

Narcissus. Yet a word may tell.

Echo. I am not weary. A little while farewell !
Let me but serve thee,—I am happiest then.

(*Echo, saying these words, vanishes among the trees.*)

Narcissus. O that the grasses near me,
And the flowers of the earth, had voice ;
I would that the trees could hear me
And even as I, rejoice !

The Dryads. (Blind art thou, Narcissus ; we hear thee, yea,
and rejoice.)

Narcissus. The desire of my heart has answer,
I have found what I sought so long,
And oh my soul is a dancer
For the dance of the soul is song !

The Dryads. (A dancer too, is the Dryad,—the green of the
bough her song.)

Narcissus. Great Earth,
Immortal vision of endless beauty and power,
Out of my inmost heart I would praise the
hour,
And the womb, that gave me birth.

Lo, there are stars above me,
World upon world in the dark air far and away,
But I am a being older than they
And they too worship and love me.
Verily little I seem,
And little in truth I should be were I only this,
But I am a spirit, a radiant being of bliss,
I am the Dreamer and all things else are the
Dream ;
For what though an utterly measureless mystery
lie
In all that the sense may see or the soul
recall ?
It is I, it is I,
I who am yet more wonderful even than all !
And if I am sad,—ah me,
If ever my soul is in pain,—
Only I pause again
And marvel that I should be.

Uncounted ages ago
I too flamed out in the darkness there, a lord
of the heavenly race,
Albeit now for a little space
In truth I am fallen low ;
And yet I remember still
The beauty that once was mine,
That now lies hid in the heights
of me
As a tarn in the crest of a hill.
Lo, there is a pool deep-set . . .
How clearly the stars in it shine !
I will bend over the water and see
If some pale glow of the olden, divine
Splendour be round me yet.

Tell me, I pray,
O breathless water hushed in the breathless
air,
If truly, as all men say,
I am yet fair !
Nothing I see in it, nothing at all . . .
Only the firmament vast and blue, . . .
And yet,— ah yea, I am there, I too,
Slenderly shapen and tall,
And oh, I discern, as I bend me above,
Mine own deep eyes,—they are eyes of love—
And over my shoulders, and caught in my
hair,
I have all the stars of the blue dark air
Each as a gem in the diadem,
In the royal robe that I wear !
Yea, I am a god in truth,
Fetterless, beautiful, strong,
And as fire is the sense of immortal youth

And the breath of my being a song,
 For a Great One truly art thou
 Whom here in the water I see,
 And I am contented now
 Only to wonder at Thee !
 Who art thou, Marvellous One ?
 What ages of time have fled
 Since even as thus Thy radiant head
 Was wreathed with planet and sun ?
 And when shall Thy feet re-tread
 The long, long way they have trod,
 And Thou, Narcissus, and Thou
 Be lost, be lost, forever,—as now—
 In the flawless beauty of God ?

*(He loses himself in contemplation of his
 own being. After a little, the Dryad
 creep out warily.)*

- 1st Dryad.* Murmuring-leaves, ah, come !
2nd Dryad. What is it ? He speaks no more.
 There is joy, joy in his eyes,
 But his lips—oh they are dumb.
1st Dryad. I would he were now as before,—
 As a branch all-broken he lies.
2nd Dryad. Shelter me, hold me near ;
 I am faint in my heart with fear.
1st Dryad. He is drowned in a dream, in a trance ;
 He does not see us or hear.
 Oh Murmuring-leaves perchance,—
 What if his spirit be fled ?
 He is dead !
2nd Dryad. Oh, he is dead ! *(She breaks out sobbing.)*

1st Dryad. I know not if this be death,
For the robe that he wears is shaken
With the rise and fall of his breath.

2nd Dryad. He will never, never awaken!

1st Dryad. Come closer : look in his eyes.

2nd Dryad. Go thou first. Thou art the bolder.

1st Dryad. He was gentle even as wise,—
I will touch him here on the shoulder.

2nd Dryad. Alas, his spirit is flown !
He is dead, he is not asleep.

1st Dryad. Now, now we can only weep
For pity of Echo—alone.

Echo. (*Singing on her way.*)

Under the lamps of the night
He that I love so well,—
Ah, how much more than a song may tell—
Shall know me the heart's-delight,
And while we wander and laugh and kiss
He shall be mine and I be his,
And I, oh I, be his!

(*Entering.*) Who then are you? How came you hither?

Nay,
I think you be not human.

2nd Dryad. Let us away,
Sister! Look, blue fire is about her head!

Echo. What are you? Speak.

2nd Dryad. Fly! She will strike us dead,—
Swift, let us fly!

Echo. Are you afraid of me?
I am not strong, nor would I hurt you. See,
Here are my fruits. I will give some to you.

1st Dryad. Thou art not angry then? We are only two
Light happy spirits who dwell here in the trees.

Echo. We will be friends, and I will give you these
In token of my love.

1st Dryad. (*Shaking her head sadly.*)
It were in vain,—
Because our only food is sun and rain,
But if we could . . .

Echo. Narcissus . . .

1st Dryad. Oh, alas!

Echo. What thinkest thou to find in the water's glass?
What is it thou beholdest?—What can it be?—
(*To the Dryads.*)

And you, for whom weep you?

2nd Dryad. For thee, for thee.

Echo. But why?

2nd Dryad. For thee, for thee our tears are shed.

Echo. Nay, I am happy!

1st Dryad. Echo . . . he is dead.

Echo. What say you? What has happened? What
have you done?
Narcissus!

1st Dryad. He is dead.

Echo. Beloved one,
Lift up thine eyes, lift up to me thine head,—
Give me some word.

1st Dryad. He cannot. He is dead.

Echo. Nay, nay, he breathes,—yet there is something
strange
Has fallen on him to bring about this change.
Narcissus,—oh my darling—hast thou heard?

Answer my hand,—ah give me only a word!
Am I no longer dear to thee, and thou,
Hast thou indeed, indeed, forgot me now?
Love, it is very soon, it is very soon,
For thou wert mine only this afternoon
And then I heard thee saying to me,—but why
Should he remember such an one as I?
He is a god, all-worshipful, all fair,
And I am dark, dark as the robe I wear.
I have lost him, yea I have lost him. He is
no more
Mine to be gladdened or cherished as before.
It is even as I feared, nay, as I said,
And never again shall I be comforted,
For once having seen the beauty that is his
How can I hope he will turn again to this?
I have given thee all that I am! Ah, woe for
me,
Narcissus, how am I struck for loving thee!

(She falls prostrate beside him.)

The Dryads. *(Crooning in a kind of elemental sympathy.)*

The fall of the leaf, or the falling of tears, the
fall of the leaf,
The moan of the wind in the boughs or the
love-cry bitter as brief,
Ah, oh, ah, oh,
All that is sad in the world is a part of the
infinite grief.

Echo. Now I shall sing no more.
For a little my life was sweet
As a golden apple to eat
But poison lay at the core,
Poison lay at the core.

- 1st Dryad.* Ah, would we were human! Would
That only we understood!
- Echo.* I danced in delight of the sun,
I laughed with the leaves on the bough,
And the trees I have loved—ah deeper none—
I have played with the clouds, but now
Never the sun shall make me glad
Or the moon be lovely to see,
For what is the whole of the world if the heart
be sad?
It has no more meaning for me.
- 1st Dryad.* Will he not turn if we call?
- Echo.* (To *Narcissus.*)
Dost thou not hear me cry?
- 1st Dryad.* Is there no thing left thee at all?
- Echo.* There is one thing left me—to die.
- 1st Dryad.* I know not how it can be,—
O inconsolable heart,
A human spirit thou art
And yet thou art sadder than we!
- 2nd Dryad.* In all this beauty of ours
Can there be nothing to give?—
Shall we not cool her eyes with grass
And comfort her soul with flowers?
- 1st Dryad.* Ah, sister, for shame! Alas,
Dost thou not know that they sleep?
- 2nd Dryad.* But how may we watch her weep?
And we so happy to live?
And yet thou sayest aright,
We cannot awake them now.
- 1st Dryad.* I know they would never forgive
Should we betray them at night.

2nd Dryad. She must be happy, . . . but how?
What else may we give her to please?
For oh she is dearer to me than they,—
I love her more than the trees!

1st Dryad. Gather them, gather them, yea.
For I too love her as thou,
I too would give to her all that we may,
And what more have we than these!

*(They stoop down among the flowers,
weaving a crown for Echo.)*

Narcissus. *(Descending from his trance.)*

O I am falling, falling! O it is gone!
Gone is the ocean of light wherein I shone.
Let me return, let me return! Ah nay,
The golden fires are dwindling, dwindling away.
There is no help. I fall. I sink. O death,
O darkness closing round, let me draw breath,—
I cannot breathe . . . Where am I?—
Who art thou

Touching me? Is it my hand? Is it my
brow?

Yea, it is I. This is my hand I see.
What then am I? A man . . . a man!
Ah me,

I am Narcissus,—now I remember all.
This is the pool I found at twilight-fall
When the stars yet were few.—Why . . .
oh, alas,

Echo, why art thou weeping—there, in the
grass?

Ah but forgive me!

Echo. Is it thou? Yea, yea,
Narcissus . . .

Narcissus. I have in truth been far away,
But come back now thrice joyous.

Echo. O can it be,—
Can it be true?—I am afraid of thee,—
Thou art all shining . . . Let me but lay
my hand
Here on thy limbs.—I cannot understand . . .
For I would laugh, having thee here once more,
And yet would weep,—thou art not as before,
I seem so far from thee.

Narcissus. Before I fell
Into that sapphire dream, we loved life well,
But ah, beloved, I think we never knew
What here I learned.

Echo. Let me then learn it too,—
I would share all thy wisdom.

Narcissus. Now do I know
That without thee I am nothing.

Echo. Thou? Not so!
If thou hast flown to heaven what need is thine
Of aught that I may give? Thou art divine,—
Thou art the sun, I am the earth.

Narcissus. Of old
There was a story that the shepherds told.
I heard it as a child, but never yet
I caught the mighty meaning in it set.
Listen, and thou shalt know that without thee
I am in truth as nought.

Echo. Tell it to me.

Narcissus. There was a god in heaven divinely strong,
But all the day he wept and all night long

And if some other great god questioned why
He was so sad, being strong, he gave reply,
*You have your worlds and you are glad. My tears
Have fallen, and yet will fall, these many years.
What is my strength? What all my love? For lo
I have no world, no world where these may grow.*
That is the tale I heard.

Echo. It is very sweet,
And if without me thou art incomplete
Let me then be thy world!

Narcissus. And I be thine,—
Love grows in us by loving . . .

Echo. And thou be mine,—
For tales are sweet to hear but sweeter art
thou,
And I,—oh I would live them here and now.
Time is so swift, I would have us act our dream,
Make life all music . . . Yet how poor I seem!
Is not thy very raiment fair as light
And mine—lo, am I not dark as night?
Not otherwise are we.

Narcissus. Draw near, draw near!
Give me thy hands, thou who art grown so
dear.
Come to me!

Echo. Ah, how gladly.

Narcissus. Oh thou art fair,—
There is a hyacinth fragrance in thine hair,—
Thou art as moonlight, thou art the breath of
spring,
Thou art the joy, the beauty of everything,—
Oh but how beautiful thou art!

Echo. Love, I am drifting, drifting into thee . . . Ah me,
Ah kiss my lips but once!

Narcissus. I kiss thee, yea—
And all the world but thou has passed away.

*(The dark robe falls from Echo, and she stands
in a garment of light, resembling that of
Narcissus.)*

Echo. Oh I am clad in fire!

Narcissus. Now we are one.
The mighty purpose of the spirit is done.
Joy, joy is life. Dost thou not hear above
All the blue stars chanting the hymn of love?

Echo. We have the universe for a bridal song—

Narcissus. Yea, and shall hear it, beloved, all life long.

Echo. Let us go forth, deep in the valley, deep,
For oh on such a night how could we sleep?
I would not lose one moment . . . Ah the
delight . . .
Oh love, oh love, this is our marriage-night!

*(They wander away into the valley. The
two Dryads coming forward, gaze after
them, hand in hand.)*

2nd Dryad. I think they are very happy . . . Didst
thou mark
The myriad-coloured flame that lit the dark
All round them where they went?

1st Dryad. It was the glow
Of their great love . . . Ah see them
where they go!

Alas, they will never more come here again . .
They are gone.

2nd Dryad. I would that we were as these twain,—
Or are their lives more sad than happy ?

1st Dryad. Nay,
Indeed, indeed, I would we were as they.
Did they not make, before they vanished hence,
A perfect marriage of the spirit and sense ?
Their tears are over now . . . and ah, the
bliss
To live, to love, in such a world as this !

*

IN A FOREST.

I FEEL whenever I am close to you
As if your soul enchanted all I see :
You rid me of the self I would not be
And wake my spiritual self anew.

I feel that round you, soft and rainbow-hued
There glows an aura lit with love and peace,
And so perhaps as my own thoughts decrease
I win your rarefied and mystic mood.

It is as though I found an inner deep,
For when a little while ago you spoke
It seemed as if in every pine awoke
Some little soul that had been fast asleep ;

The forest filled with presences. There fell
On both of us a hush of solemn thought,—
How deep the veils of mystery are wrought,
How dreamlike is the world wherein we dwell.

Yet when we turn the spirit's light within
And realise our very selves at last,
The memory wakes of that primeval past
In which the stars and we had origin ;

Till pondering half in rapture, half in fear,
There rises up in us from hidden springs
A mightier mystery than all outward things,—
Or so it is I feel when you are near.

Even just now as on the fern we trod
Or lingering laid our hands upon the pine,
I knew that near to me was one divine
And in your voice I heard the Voice of God.

*

BY A WINDOW.

WE two have spoken long this golden afternoon
Of those eternal dreams that are the soul's release,
Until the ways of thought have led us here to peace
And in the silence hushed we silently commune.

I seem to know you now as never once before,
And on the wings of love in some mysterious way
To rise above myself or what was yesterday
The little fevered self that I shall be no more.

For now the very sense that you yourself are near
Is like a starry hush that follows after storm ;
It is as though around your twilight-hidden form
There shines an aureole of colours deep and clear.

I did not hope to feel while under life's control
An ecstasy like this that passes human speech :
We feel as though our selves were mingling each in each
And yet we have but gazed one moment soul to soul.

We have but known a faint foreshadowing of that bliss
Which we shall know at last when Time itself is done
And you and I, long since and evermore at one,
Shall be the life, the love, the soul of all that is.

*

YOUTH.

WITHIN a primrose wood I lay content
Upon a certain blithe blue day of spring,
And, ever near, my lover came or went
And gathering violets ever did she sing.

So fair she was I laughed for love, and cried
“ Still can I see how yesterday you stood,
Your whole fair frame rejoicing in its pride
And lovelier than the whole spring-lovely wood ! ”

Ah then she paused and coming where I sat
Smiled, and with one dear hand upon my head
“ *O love, my love, may you remember that
When I am no more beautiful* ” she said.

*

ARCADIAN MELODY.

ALL day silently worshipping the sun,
All day long in a forest, in early Spring,
Where hardly we found a primrose, hardly a violet-ring,
Hand in hand as children, happy as they,
Now did we wander slowly, now did we run,—
Run in the dry deep foliage far and away,
And ever, though singing or laughing, deep deep in the
spirit all day
Silently worshipping, silently loving, the sun.

And then as we wearied a little and found us a place
Full in the warmth and lovely with delicate sound,
Spreading your broad blue mantle we lay on the ground
And ah, so near to my mouth was the wild-rose flush of
your face !
Only I heard the soft-blown branches above,
Only I looked upon you, upon you in your grace,
And I who had been but a man was a fire-wing'd spirit
of love.

Shall we not always remember the moment of bliss
When, as the earth and the heaven and we were at one,
Each of us gathered our whole heart's love in a kiss?
I shall recall it whatever my years may bring,
For I felt as if you were the blue of the tender sky,
The joy of the life in the leaves, and the warmth of the
sun—
All that was fair in the world was a breath of your beauty,
and I,
I for a moment was drawn, held, lost in the heart of
the Spring!

*

LYRIC.

Now shalt thou know why it is that I wonder ;
Often and often I said in my heart,
Said when I saw thee alone or with people,
Moving among them
Perfect as ever was Phryne of old :

“ Were I but beautiful, even as thou art,
Lovely of body and lovely of soul,
Long, long ago like the shepherd Narcissus
I should have fallen,
Fallen forever in love with myself.”

*

“DIVINE UNREASON.”

WHY do we ever greet,
My dear one, when we meet?
And when the loving-hours are over, why
Murmur and kiss good-bye?

For when I ope the door
And you come in once more,
Are not the common days that flowed between
As if they had not been?

It is as though this fair
Glad inner life we share,
This life of love so beautiful, so strange,
Had never suffered change,

But rather were, indeed,
The one true life we lead,—
And yet there is a sweetness none could tell
Even to say farewell!

*

THE HAPPY PRISONER.

O 'TIS a shame, dear heart,
That such as you and I should ever have to part ;
It is a heavenly wrong that He
Who gave the soul her body should not have made her free !

I would my fettered soul
Were under no such fast, such absolute control,
But were so generously wrought
That she might wing to thee at will along the air of thought.

And yet, why no, no, no,
I'll not complain, —in truth I would not have it so ;
Life is a gift so sweet, so sweet
When after many days apart lover and lover meet !

*

THE WINE OF THE GODS.

Now that as nectar from an Olympian bowl
I drain the draught of music, unconfined
I feel the godlike stature of my soul
Towering above mankind.

I am an Alexander ! I alone,
Wielding the mighty will that now I bear,
Could make the unmanageable world my throne
And all men living fair.

O wine of the gods ! O spirit burning the clay !
O wings of music beating beyond all bound !
Alas, O waxen wings, melting away,
Alas, O failing sound !

Gone is the music now and gone the might.
I fall through leagues of silence, and in pain,
Even as Icarus flung down from the height
Here to myself again.

Ah that the spirit were an enchanted lyre
And with its own-made music as with breath
Could fan to flame that momentary fire
From childhood on to death !

*

TRAFALGAR SQUARE.

Do you not also feel, as here we gaze
Down on the drifting multitudes below,
As if we had seen many crowded ways
Like this but long ago ?

Perhaps when all our world is old and strange,
Down-looking from some spiritual height
Through twice a thousand unborn years of change,
We shall recall this night :

The flaring lamps, the surging crowds of men,
The sad or happy things we hear or see,
And how we dimly wondered, even then,
If such a thing might be.

*

IN NEW YORK.

I STOOD with men upon the crowded curb,
And far with certain sorrows drawn apart
I thought " There is indeed no magic herb
May heal the sad of heart."

And then a voice within me where I stood
Said softly, like a sound among the trees,
" You are but one of all this multitude :
What is your pain to these ? "

And I became the voice, and what was me
No more than on the sand a single grain.
I found myself in all that I could see
And smiled upon my pain.

It seemed a little thing not worth a sigh,
For then I felt the sorrow of all mankind.
And seeing how men seek only what shall die
Knew that the world is blind.

*

THE UNQUENCHABLE LAMP

WHAT fever moves the mind of man
That now he needs no more
The grace wherewith his life began,
The wonder-sense of yore ?

The deeds of man were nobly done
And all his works were fair
When myriads hailed the moon and sun
With song and choric prayer.

But yet the stars endure above
And if naught now be left
Of all that ancient beauty-love
We are not quite bereft ;

We have the woods and rocky streams,
The wide blue heaven or sea,
And more than they our mighty dreams
Of what the world shall be.

*

ICARUS.

ὅπου τὸ χαίρειν μηδαμοῦ νομίζεται.

Now having known that all we love is naught,
Having discerned how all we do is vain,
And ah so long, so passionately sought
But never found my joy of life again
I bow to man's inevitable pain,
The doom of man, the heavy doom of thought.

For like some cold implacable grey sea
Wave upon wave eternity moves on,
Heedless of such poor shadow-shapes as we
Nor satiate with the glories that are gone
But ever seeking more to prey upon
Till the white host of heaven shall no more be.

And I, a spirit half human, half divine,
Fettered upon a dizzy thought, essay
With what of singing-beauty may be mine
To give the soul that listening night and day
Hears the dread ocean murmuring far away,
Silence and one brief moment's anodyne.

“ALL THINGS FLEET AWAY.”

I WOULD I were but sure
That after life is past
The soul should not endure
But fall asleep at last.

If life could only cease,
If only death could give
Some certitude of peace,
It would be sweet to live.

To live contented so
With all that earth can lend,
Nor seek at all to know
How everything shall end.

Alas, but I am tired
With thinking overmuch
For all I once desired
Now crumbles at my touch.

O bitter gift of thought!
The very deepest joy
That ever man has sought
At length would only cloy.

And well I now divine
How men return, afraid,
And seek the charm of wine,
Of beauty that shall fade.

For so with song and smile
And flying shapes of sense
May man forget awhile
The stars' impermanence.

I gaze upon the deep
And see myself a load,
Eternity a steep
And everlasting road.

I gaze upon the deep
And long, and long invain,
That I might fall asleep—
Never to toil again.

Ah friend if you should know
Or come to understand
What here I sing of, lo
I clasp you by the hand.

*

COUNSEL.

NEVER forget that beauty can heal a thousand ills ;
 Make as a world of dream the room wherein you dwell.
Let there be joyous-coloured flowers along the window-sills
 In bowls or vases wrought of the heart's-delight and well :
 Ah think it worth your care
 That even the very raiment which you wear
Be eloquent of all you love, be soft of hue and fair.

Have I not known that life is very brief ?
 That all fair things endure but a breath, and fade ?
 Have I not known
The ebbing back of the world in the hour of grief?
 I dreamed of Eternity and the dream I made
 Hung on my heart for years heavily like a stone.

I, too, have cried in my spirit "*What should I do
 Building a city of sand on the edge of the sea ?
 What are the beautiful shapes of the sense to me ?
Alas, what is their worth ?*"
But now, but now I have seen all things anew,
 Now have I read the purpose hidden above,
 Locked in the timeless pondering Heart of the Whole,
 For until you are deeply, utterly lost in love
With all the joy and beauty and wonder of earth
 The angels will not pause at the flowerless tree of your
 soul.

THE GAY HEART TO THE HEAVY.

O now have done with trouble
And bid good-bye to care,
For thinking will but double
The load of grief you bear ;
O let's be young to-day
And live our lives to rhyme
Through all an afternoon of May
Until the setting-time.

And where the sunbeam dances
Your heavy heart shall yield
To pleasant thoughts and fancies
Within a pleasant field
Where down beside a stream
And in the grasses curled
We'll take the soul of man for theme
And plan the perfect world !

Then out with me! Be merry,
For none may pine who sees
The bloom of plum and cherry
That rooks the orchard-trees,
Or dandelion clocks
And buttercups for chains
And lilac-tinted ladysmocks,
In green delicious lanes.

*

THE SECRET.

CHILDREN in an autumn wood
Gathering like enchanter's treasure
Fallen foliage hundred-hued
Cry aloud for pleasure.

We whom sudden thoughts of fire
Flaming at the heart impassion
Give ourselves our own desire
With the songs we fashion.

Idly, idly men have sought
Some deep aim they could not capture ;
Sun and moon and earth are naught
But a song of rapture.

He who made earth fair and wild,
He who set the heaven with glory
Did but make them as a child
Makes a wonder-story.

*

THE MEANING OF MAN.

Take courage ; for the race of man is divine—The Golden Verses.

DEAR and fair as Earth may be
Not from out her womb are we,—
Like an elder sister only, like a foster-mother, she,
For we come of heavenly lineage, of a pure undying race,
We who took the popped potion of our life, and
quaffing deep
Move enchanted now forever in the shadow world of
sleep,
In the vast and lovely vision that is wrought of time and
space.

Overhead the sun and moon
Shining at the gates of birth
Give to each a common boon,—
All the joy of earth ;
Mountains lit with moving light,
Forest, cavern, cloud and river,
Ebb and flow of day and night
Around the world forever.

These and all the works of man may he who will behold,
Mighty shapes of bygone beauty, songs of beaten gold,
Starlike thoughts that once, in ages gone, were found by
säer-sages,
All the thron'd and murmuring Past, the life men loved
of old.

Yet sometimes at the birth of night when hours of heat
 and splendour
 Melt away in darkness, and the flaming sun has set
 Across the brooding soul will sweep, like music sad and
 tender,
 Sudden waves of almost passionate regret,
 For then the hills and meadowlands, the trees and
 flowerful grasses,
 All the world of wonder that our eyes have gazed upon,
 Seems remote and mournful, as a rainbow when it passes
 Leaves the heart lamenting for the beauty come and
 gone,
 And in the deep that is the soul there surges up a cry
 " Whence are all the starry legions traversing the sky ?
 Whence the olden planets and the sun and moon and
 earth ?
 Out of what came all of these and out of what came I ? "
 And far away within the same unfathomable deep
 Comes an answer rolling " Earth and moon and sun,
 All that is, that has been, or that ever time shall reap,
 Is but moving home again, with mighty labours done,
 The Many to the Everlasting One."

And this is the meaning of man,
 The task of the soul,
 The labour of worlds, and the plan
 That is set for the whole,
 For the spark of the spirit imprisoned within it,
 In all things one and the same,
 Aeon by aeon and minute by minute
 Is longing to leap into flame,
 To shatter the limits of life and be lost in a glory intense
 and profound
 As the soul with a cry goes out into music and seeks to
 be one with the sound.

For as those that are sunken deep
In the green dim ocean of sleep,
In a thousand shapes for a thousand ages the one great
Spirit is bound.

The air we inhale and the sea,
The warm brown earth and the sun,
Came forth at the Word of the One
From the same First Mother as we,
And now, as of old when the world began
The stars of the night are the kindred of man,
For all things move to a single goal,
The giant sun or the thinking soul.
Ah what though the Tree whose rise and fall
Of sap is fed from the Spirit of All,
With suns for blossoms and planets for leaves,
Be vaster yet than the mind conceives ?
Earth is a leaf on the boundless Tree,
And the unborn soul of the earth are we.

O man is a hungering exiled people, a host in an unknown
land,
A wandering mass in the vast with only a blank horizon
to face,
Yet still, though we toil for a time in the heat over
measureless deserts of sand
The longing for beauty that shines in the soul is the
guiding-star of the race.
It is this that alone may redeem
A world ignoble with strife,
This only bring all that we dream
From the shattered chaos of life,
And this that forever shall spur us and lead us from peak
unto peak on the way
Till body and spirit be welded in one and the long
Night fall on the Day,

And all the sonorous music of time, the hills and the
woods and the wind and the sea,
The one great song of the whole creation, of all that is
and that yet shall be,
Chanted aloud as a pæan of joy by the Being whose
home is the vast
Shall tremble away in silence, and all be gone at the last,
Save only afar in the Heart of the Singer of whom it was
chanted and heard
Remembrance left of the music as a sunset-fire in the
west,
Remembrance left of the mighty Enchanted Palace that
rose at His Word,
This, and a joy everlasting, an immense inviolate rest.

*

THRENODY ON THE DEATH OF SWINBURNE.

“The supreme head of song.”

NEVER again, O poet passionate-hearted,
Men shall hear music such as thrilled in thee :
From all he loved a singer has now departed
Fair as the fierce fair sea.

Now should thy Motherland go hushed for sorrow,—
Nay, half the world look theeward—being bereft,
For now no beauty shall come with any morrow
Such as thy days have left.

But though men mourn and lift up lamentation
Because, of many such, a king lies dead,
This one all-perfect poet a mighty nation
Honours with no bowed head.

Yet we who love with all-eclipsing passion
Beauty, cast out by greed of might or gold,
Salute thy spirit in the fair antique fashion,
Singer hellenic-souled ;

Since when we caught the deep sound of thy chanting,
Like a worn army sighting home were we,—
Like those who rushed up the last hills, and panting
Shouted “The sea, the sea !”

O far-flown days! O mightiest of all pleasures,
When, like a swimmer, I an all-eager boy
Dashed by the spray, the salt of thy sea-measures
Clove the blue brine of joy!

Not without choral music of men living,
Skilled more than I, shall fade that fiery heart,
But having likewise taken of thy free giving
I too would fain have part.

Thee, thee we may not mourn for thou art deathless,
Rather we mourn the close of all thy song,
The beauty-breathing lips now dumb and breathless
That held us bound so long.

Thou wert as one whose rapid soul enkindled
Remembering what thine own clear voice had sung
In Athens ere the fire of beauty dwindled,
When all men yet were young.

Earth is the great primeval revelation
Set for the soul, considering, to divine,
And we, too slow of wise interpretation,
Take now from earth our sign;

Take now assurance of that Pervading Spirit,
At Whose word April with impulsive breath
Stirs the white world, how all things here inherit
Alternate life and death.

Wherefore shalt thou, new-born in after ages,
Weave of new words a second golden fleece,
As once he taught, the kingliest of all sages,
In the noon-time of Greece.

Yea the mute lyre that we have heard, have cherished,
Again shall make man brother to sea and earth,—
A little while sleep on! Thou art not perished,
Not dead but waiting birth.

O hand that leaves a lyre forever thrilling!
O charioteer,—not as one gladly gone
But as a victor fallen asleep unwilling,—
A little while sleep on!

But we whom thou has left, alas thou dying,
Leaderless, lost, a broken singing-clan,
We may but cry “Master, farewell,” and crying
Mourn the long loss to man.

April 11th, 1909.

*

TO LITTLE STELLA.

MORE strange and wonderful you seem
Than moon or sun,
Because but lately, little one,
You broke your dream :

Because your soul not quite awake
May hear at times
The harmony of softer rhymes
Than we can make,

The music of the hosts above
Who prized you so
That seeing how you had to go
They sought for love,

And found it where the gates of birth
Were held by two
That like enchanters gave to you
The whole sweet earth.

They gave you all the trees and flowers,
The blue deep skies
That even are bluer than these eyes
That gaze on ours.

They gave the stars who shine afar
And softly kiss
Each night the little child who is
Herself a star.

They gave the world : its eager strife,
Its echoing past,
When first upon your soul they cast.
The spell of life.

And yet though earth be fair we fret
And seek to win
The subtler worlds that are within
And lovelier yet.

We lose our lives in hope to climb
To that far place
Where you were dreaming, out of Space
And out of Time.

But now, with you to teach, we find
This earth anew
And wonder how, beholding you,
We once were blind ;

For who shall say to us what great
And wondrous thing
The world that sent us you may bring
If we but wait ?

*

THE ESSAYS OF MONTAIGNE.

FLORIO, a wreath to crown your grizzled head
Albeit no more you walk our earthly stage,
Since in a commerce-whipped and restless age
You brought me back the leisure that is fled
With such a gathering spell that while I read
The mellowed speech whereto you wrought the page
Of this old garrulous and friendly sage
I moved with people that have long been dead.

And many a time I saw you, quill in hand,
Labouring in your lamplit raftered room,
Your cloak and rapier flung across the chair,
Your folios round you whence at whiles you scann'd
A murderous cobbled alley's dismal gloom,
Or heard some seaman roar a Spanish air.

*

THE MAN OF THE WORLD.

UP in the Green Bird smoking-room one day,
Caught by the chinking noise of dominoes
And liking well the pieces rang'd in rows,
Unseen I watched the men about me play ;
And one who sat
Sharp-eyed, red-waistcoated, with shining hat,
A swaggering fellow stuffed with mundane lore,
Seemed to regard all earth as his domain
So great an air he wore,
And in his heart this man was very vain.

But even while he spoke,
The Self within my daily self awoke
And in the depth of heaven I overheard
Two spirits in a planet far away
Who communed in their souls without a word,
And while they moved among their flaming flowers,
One to the other said :
*" Is yon dim star a living world or dead ?
Think you it is inhabited like ours ? "*
And thereupon (but with the speed of thought)
His beautiful companion answered "*Nay,
Belovéd, who shall say ?
But if she have her lords we know them not.*"

AN ITALIAN TRIPTYCH.

FROM FRANCESCO PETRARCA.*

" In qual parte del cielo, in quale idea . . . "

IN what high sphere, what archetypal thought,
Did Nature find so marvellous a mould,
Whereby as much of heaven as earth may hold
Should to that fair beloved face be brought?
What river nymph or dryad ever caught
The glow of dawn on hair of such fine gold?
What other heart hath grace as manifold?
In such fair wise was my dead lady wrought.

In vain looks he for beauty heavenly-high
Who never saw what now lies out of reach,—
How graciously she turned to make reply.

Nor knoweth he how love can cure or teach
Who never knew how softly she would sigh,
How very gentle were her smile and speech.

* The first line is to be explained by Plato's doctrine of Ideas.

FROM LUDOVICO ARIOSTO.

" Altri loderà il viso, altri il chione . . . "

MANY an one may eloquently extol
His lady's face or hair, the ivory guise
Whereafter Nature formed her breasts and thighs,

Or pay large irises immortal toll,
But I, I praise not beauty void of soul,
I seek a fair free spirit wrought in such wise
That hardly would she deign to recognise
The mortal body's burdensome control.

Me gentle ways and gracious deeds allure,
Me language that is drawn from wisdom's well,
And were the substance of my craft more pure,
Worthier of that whereof I fain would tell,
Lo, I would mould a statue should endure,
When all this age is gone, imperishable.

FROM TORQUATO TASSO.

"Tu parti, o rondinella, e poi ritorni . . ."

O SWALLOW, swallow, how art thou volatile,—
Year upon year thatching thy summer's nest
Then, after kindlier winter gone in quest,
Winging to Memphis and the shores of Nile—
But whether my days be such as frown or smile
Always hath Love dominion of my breast
As though he had left Cnidos dispossessed
And far from Paphos had flown forth awhile.

Here like a bird he broods, until that hour
When, breaking the weak shell, in fluttering rout
The little fledgling baby-loves fly out
In such great numbers that he hath no power
To calm their wings or cries,—and yet and yet
In one heart's nest these many griefs are met.

THE MYTH OF OSIRIS.

I.

WANDERING once by a river the Spirit of Evil, Sēt,
Found at the noon Osiris fallen asleep in the West,
And a thought rose red in his heart ; he looked on the
sleeper with hate,
He measured the length of the limbs, the arch of the
breathing breast,
And hurrying straightway forth
To the hills of the desolate north
He carved on an ill-won plan
A coffer shaped as a man ;
Then with a far-thrown voice did he turn to the West and
the East
Crying, " O Brothers, rejoice ! for behold I have made
you a feast !"
And far from the deeps of the air the Immortals came at
the cry,
And laughed, being empty of care, and the stars were born
in the sky ;
With the fire of the wine impassioned they chanted a music
of mirth
And out of their joy they had fashioned the sun, the moon,
and the earth.
But then with his eyes on flame
The God of the Whirlwind came,

And into the silence brought
The direful coffer he wrought,
Saying, " Let him who is tall,
 Who is broad, as the shape I have hewn
 Take now for his minions the sun and the moon,
 And the new-made earth for a thrall ;"
And each of the Gods, desirous, lay down in the Coffers of
Sēt,
But each with a laugh uprose for the length of the hollow
 was great,
Till Osiris came at the last and the walls that were massive
 and high
Closed on the radiant limbs as the eyelid shuts on the eye.
 Then ran Sēt like a fire-hot blast,
 He and the Gods that were evil of thought,
 Saw how the Lover of Man lay caught
And hammered the long lid fast.
They set him afloat on the waves of the Nile
 And all day long in the fire of the sun,
Flowing by desert or green-girt isle
 Gladly the blue waves drifted him on,
Till, as the day to the sundown wore,
Fain as it seemed of the burden they bore,
 Close to a city, beholden of none,
Softly they lay him ashore.

II.

When Isis, Mother of All,
 Asleep in the moonlit night,
Dark and beautiful, tall
 And robed in a rainbow-light,
Heard that her lover and lord
 Was cruelly trapped and slain,

As one who is pierced with a sword
She sprang to her feet for pain ;
She arose in an eddy of fears
And her eyes were dim with tears
But she gave no cry as in haste
She wandered out on the waste.
She wandered, lost as a bird,
For a whole life-length of years
But never a whispered word
Of the great Osiris heard,

Until to a city she came, to a palace that looked on the sea,
For there was the Coffers of Sēt shut fast in an erica-tree,
High-poised as a pillar where nightly when all but the stars
were asleep

Changing herself to a swallow she would flutter her wings
and weep.

For there did she nurse in the night
The babe of the queen for a year,
Till once in an hour of desire
Astarte the queen drew near,
And beholding around her a light,
A glory of rainbow-fire,
She cried as a soul in its flight,
Cried out, being frozen with fear ;

And the people besought in their terror the Goddess of
Love to depart,

Saying, " Declare as thou wilt, we will give thee the wish of
thy heart,"

And so to a region remote, with pomp and funeral state,
In a reed-made magical boat, she carried the Coffers of Sēt,
And long, having shattered aside the star-clad walls and
the lid,

Gentle and hushed as a bride she gazed on the body they
hid.

Beautiful now, being dead, he lay as it were in a swoon
And over his low-hung head was the rim of the vanishing
moon.

Then with her body asway, with tears in her shimmering
hair

Sadly did Isis pray and the rushes murmured her prayer :

“ Osiris lo ! it is I, it is I thy lover and wife !

Hearken to me as I cry and receive the breath of my life !

Nay, he will live not again ; he will never come back,” she
said,

“ All that I whisper is vain for the Bird of the Spirit is fled.”

Then low in the listening calm a sound of the sunrise stirred
And out from a forest of palm floated a wandering bird.

III.

Lovely to her was the murmur of morn,
For at sunrise once had the Fair One born

A man-child, Horus, the Morning Star,
When life was heavy and she forlorn,
Wherefore now with a love-light hand
Isis, over the dunes of sand,

Bore her lover and lay him far
In the heart of the palm-encircled land,
Hastening then to a lonely place
Where mountain-folk of a mortal race
Fostered in secret the Fire-born One,
Horus, Child of the Sun.

But lo ! as he hunted at midnight Sēt, finding the track of
a pathway, soon

Came where the God by a luckless fate shone with the fire
of the moon.

Then in a fury his heart grew red : he severed the limbs
and the sacred head,

Scattered them far to the ends of the earth and a whirlwind
rose as he fled.

And over the earth once more,
A goddess, a pilgrim of pain,
Isis fared as of yore
Seeking, and seeking in vain,
Till far in a desert untrod
And of all men living forsaken
She found her lover the God
And bore him away to the West,
Where chanting the funeral hymns,
With rattle of sistra shaken,
With hands that beat at her breast,
She embalmed the body, the limbs,
And laid her lover to rest.

And the Windblown Wheel of the Years went round and
Horus, grown to be great,
As a prince in pursuit of a lion sought long through the
world for Sēt.

Thrice were the hues of the sunset hid in the cloud of the
sand upflung,
And the starshine leapt on the javelins and the rims of the
chariots rung ;
But lo ! as the light of the third day fell the Fire-born
lifted his sword
And flinging the God from his chariot he smote off the
hands he abhorred.

So, being worn with the battle they fought, as the wings of
the night unfurled,
Shadows divine and colossal the Gods withdrew from the
world :

So having travailed in ages of yore with the cosmic spirit
of man

Earth gave life to her child, and the long-drawn drama
began.

THE MARRIAGE OF THE SOUL.

SCENE I.

Outside, invisible, the blue river Nile is flowing onward imperturbably, past the white cities of ancient Egypt, on by the Pyramids, the palm-trees and the little mud-built villages. Across the river is a great city where the men and women of those days are labouring and laughing, buying and selling, visiting each other, and some few of them pondering on the mystery of life.

The scene is the interior of an Egyptian Sepulchre. It is a cave-like place. The walls are frescoed with pictures of the soul's adventures in the Underworld. They are mostly in black and red. Several upright coffins with gleaming faces are seen against the walls. In the middle there is a statue of Osiris, exalted on a throne, and near the foot of the throne is a natural rock-seat protruding from the wall. To the left is an opening. Two or three little lamps in the crevices of the walls give an unequal light.

To the extreme right a huddled figure sits motionless on the floor. For a moment there is no sound: then voices are heard approaching the door. Khnēmu-en-hāt and Nēfer-heb-f appear, clothed after the style of priest and acolyte during the XIVth dynasty (2,000 B.C.).

Khnēmu-en-hāt. Before the mourners come a last few words
Of counsel would I give you, Nēfer-heb-f,
And since we have but little time for speech
Weigh my words well. We have no time
to spare.

Even as I came here, up the sandy road,
I saw the brown wings of the funeral barge
Close to the shore, and ere the moon is up
The dead will here be with us.

Nēfer-heb-f.

Master, you know
That whatsoever work you may give to me
I will accomplish,—if indeed I can.

Kh. Do but remember, this that you undertake—
This uttering of the Ritual for the Dead—
Is mightier and more solemn than all the
deeds
Of your whole life.

Nef. And if I fail ?

Kh. You die.
But do you fear to fail ? I will not think it !
You know the ritual, question and response,
Perfectly as I know it. Put away fear . . .
Yet I remember, fifty years ago
When I first spoke this ritual, I was afraid,
I, too, a little.

Nef. But not, not with my fear !

Kh. Are you afraid of death ? Why then, in
truth
You were unfitted for your work to-night.
What is it but the holding up of a lamp
On earth to guide the footsteps of the dead ?
Go,—if you quail. I am the Forge of God
And in my flame I will fashion of you a spear
Or fling you forth disproved.

Nef. It is not death
Who makes me falter, nay but a God more
strong,
More terrible much, than he.

Kh. Enough, enough,
You are over-anxious, and your words run
on
Like a ship when the rowers pull no more.
Listen ! The mourners when they come
will lay
The last Osiris under this little lamp

So that the light may flutter about her face
And the great God behold her. Then shall
you
Come forward, so,—take up your staff, and
cry
The words “O Mourners, why do you
wail?” Then, then,
Gather your thoughts toward you like a
bow,
Draw them up tense and will that all you
feel
She too shall feel, and though you may see
them not
Your thoughts will surely find her.

Nef.

Khñēmu-en-hāt,
If I break silence you will forgive me,—oh
I am in torment.

Kh.

You amaze me, child ;
I had thought you stronger.

Nef.

I have betrayed you, yes
I have betrayed you. Master, I cannot do
it!
Though you should have me slain I cannot
do it!
What should I do but tell ?
For oh I am sick of secrets, and of all things
Weariest of my own self. I must go forth,
I must renounce my robe,—yes I will go
Now,—I will cast it off, and like a slave
Run naked to the desert.

Kh.

Nēfer-heb-f,
What is it you have done? Fasten your
robe!

Nef. I will make an end, albeit when all is told
You, you will spurn me, you will cast me
forth
And my whole life be shipwrecked.

Kh. What have you done ?

Nef. I will bare my soul to you, but yet . . .
[Turning his eyes toward the old sēer.]

Kh. But yet ?

Nef. You, you alone shall hear me when I speak.

Kh. I alone listen. Do you not know this man ?
A blind old sēer. Not of our world is he.

Nef. Old man, old man I would your soul were
mine,—
And yet no, no I would not.—Kh-nēmu-
en-hāt

When I first came to you in the Moon of
Mirth

And there before the great Osiris kneeled
With Heru-saf-anēp and Heru-ā
And Hū-en-āmen with me, I did wrong.
I never should have come to you.

Kh. Say on.

Nef. We swore that like a brilliant-coloured robe
We would lay down the common life of
men,

All passion, all the raptures of the sense,
All that is earthly fair, because you said
That you could lead us, if we but learned
your lore,

Into those marvellous kingdoms of the soul
That lie beyond the Desert, the broad
Waste

Which men call death.

Kh.

I can do this.

Nef.

For me
Already that early longing, that boyish hope,
Lies like a shattered goddess at my feet.

Kh.

How? Do you mean . . . ?

Nef.

Yes, you have guessed! My heart
Has rent in twain my will. I was too
young.

I love a woman,—nay, she is beautiful,
Pure, an Egyptian, nobly born. . . .

Kh.

Enough!
Think you I care for beauty or noble birth?
Women are all as one, a plague, a pest,
By their mere nature at enmity with God,
Forever tightening round the spirit of man
Venomous nets of silky loveliness,
Or with their babble hindering as with mire
The footsteps of the soul.

Nef.

Say as you will!
For you it is not as it is for me.
You have spilt the wine of life, tossed it in
air,
But my imagination is all athirst
And life allures me still.

Kh.

What would you have?
The banquets where the people lie and
watch
With lotus-wagging hair and swimming eyes
The naked dancing-girls? or if not that
Is it the singing parties with their boats
Paddling at midnight under the blue stars?
The hunting of the lion or crocodile?
Laughter and wine and wit?

Nef. No, no, not these.
All these I know are nothing.

Kh. These are life!

Nef. Oh you would never understand, nor I
Perhaps could ever tell you.

Kh. Nēfer-heb-f
How is it possible that you hesitate?
They who can win the powers that I impart
Are in a generation few and rare
As emeralds on a pebble-littered shore,
But the whole multitude, even the slaves
Can live the life you wish for.

Nef. Heart of ice,
You never dreamed how lovely life could be
Or you had never scorned it.

Kh. Choose your way.
I, I demand the heart, the will, the soul,
The body and the shadow, all in all,
Or nothing. But remember . . .

Nef. What?

Kh. That I
Take no man back who leaves me.

Nef. Oh alas!

Kh. Why, 'tis for you to love your dream of God
As common men the tinsel toys of life,—
As you now love this woman. Else go
forth,—
I will not have you, . . . Nay, but it
cannot be,—
Nay, but assure me,—tell me her name;
her name!
Who is it that you love?

Nef. Ah be not wroth !
A priestess of Osiris . . .

Kh. But her name . . .

Nef. Nes-hathor.

Kh. What ? A maiden of the gods ?
But,—but you know—, Nes-hathor, is it she!

Nef. Khnēmu-en-hāt I never saw you weep.
Ah but forgive me,—I have hurt your soul.

Kh. Not a word more ! I am ashamed of these.
And yet poor boy . . .

Nef. But, Master, I am forsworn
And she, she is a Bride of the great God !

Kh. Child, you have sinned, and you shall pay
your debt.

Nef. You make me fear you.

Kh. In despite of all
I charge you speak the Ritual for the Dead.
Listen : they come.

Nef. I dare not think it true,—
Can you still ask me, knowing my heart is
changed
And all my vows in tatters ?

Kh. Child, obey !
Master your heart and bridle it with your
will ;
Hush your wild thoughts. Here in the
bourne of rest
All should be still, the body, heart, and
soul.
Peace ! peace ! I send you peace !

Nef.

I am prepared.
May peace pervade me ; may my soul be
calm ;
May the One God illumine me with peace.
I am prepared.

Kh.

They come. Take up your staff.

(The Mourners enter from the left, singing. Eight young girls in grey garments come in, two by two, and after them the mummy in its many-coloured case, mounted upon a model-boat ; finally come six young priests. They are chanting a monotonous refrain, softly, sadly, and with many gestures of lamentation. Khnëmu-en-hât and Nêfer-heb-f are now standing to the right, beside the old Sêr. The mourners arrange themselves in the strictly symmetrical manner of an Egyptian fresco. From time to time during the ensuing scene the mourners, who are kneeling on the ground and sitting back on their heels, bow their heads forward, clapping the palms of their hands.)

The Mourners.

(Chanting to their drums and lyres.)

Fare thee well, Osiris, fare thee well !

Hereto the House of Rest

We bring thy shadow, thy shell ;

Here on the hallowed shores of the Nile in the sad gold
light of the West,

Hail, Osiris,—hail, and a last farewell !

From Ra who is lovely to see, from the beauty of Khons,
She hath travelled a long way, she who was near to us once,

For Death has hid from her sight

The Left Eye of Noot and the Right,—

She is robbed of the moon's fair light, she is gone from the
sun's.

Ah no, it is false ! Ah no ! for in spite of our tears,
In spite of the tears that flow, of the heart that fears,

The soul that was in her is one

With the gathered host of the Sun,

She is there in His Evening Boat of a Thousand Years !

Fare thee well, Osiris, fare thee well!
 Here in the House of Rest
 We lay thine empty shell ;

Here on the shores of the sacred stream in the low sad
 light of the West,
 Hail, Osiris, hail, and a last farewell !

Nef. Mourners, why do you wail? and why do
 you beat at your breasts?
 Why do you thus lament? for life is goodly
 to live.

Mourners. Wail with us, O priest. Here is Osiris, dead.

Nef. Nay, you utter idle speech! Before the
 world was fashioned
 Fell the great Osiris, before the moon and
 sun ;
 All the glittering lotus-flowers upon the
 Lake of Midnight,
 These are but the fragments of His Body.

Mourners. Here again he lies, the one great God.
 Many are the Garments that the one God
 wears.
 Hath He not a dwelling in the fiery Boat of
 Ra,
 Yea, and in the dust of the Nile ?

Nef. Woe is me, alas! What manner was his
 death?

Mourners I. Broken was the Body of Osiris
 By the craft of the cruel god Sēt ;

Mourners II. And her heart and her beauty and her
 name
 They were flung away like water on the
 wind.

- Nef.* To the South, to the West of the world
The limbs of Osiris are scattered :
To the East and the North are scattered
Her heart and her name.
- A Mourner.* She is lost in the desert of death,
She wanders alone and afraid.
- Nef.* She wanders alone and afraid,—
O me she is lost !
- Mourners.* Weep, then, weep for the body of Osiris
Murdered by the fierce god Sēt.
- Nef.* *(With wide-spread arms.)*
Open your lips, O mourners, with a crying,
a crying of joy !
Isis, the Mother of God,
With magical singing and love
Has gathered the limbs of her brother
Osiris,
Breathing upon them her life.
Lo there he is risen again,—
Hail, oh hail, to the God !
Gather your strength and lift up the fallen
body ;
Exalt her body and set her straight as
of old.
- Mourners.* We gather our strength, we lift up the
empty body ;
Lo, she is lifted again, she is lifted again !
(They place the mummy upright against the wall.)
- Nef.* Cry out for the soul that is risen
And praise the God Khēper-Ra.
- Mourners.* Praise to the Prince of the Sunrise,
To the God Khēper-Ra be praise !

- Nef.* Horus, the son of Osiris,
He hath slain the slayer of his Father.
- Mourners.* Make music ; oh clap your hands ; be glad !
Osiris the God hath risen to life,
The soul of the dead hath risen.
- Nef.* What have you done to help her ?
What have you done ?
Here at my feet is her body
But she is alone in the darkness,
Friendless, afraid, unguided ;
In the Underworld are her steps.
- Mourners.* We have given her food that she may not
hunger
For earthly bread :
We have given her jewels and Words of
Power,
And a Chapter drawn from the Sacred
Book
We have caused to be laid at her side.
- Nef.* It is well : yet more should we do.
For away in the world of the dead
There are those that seek to devour her,
Shadowy monsters,
Fiercer than even the terrible beast of the
desert
Or the crocodiles of the river.
From these O Pharoah of all the Gods
Hold her safe we beseech thee !
- Mourners.* From all that is evil and all dark powers
Hold her safe we beseech thee !
- Nef.* She has entered the unknown world :
She has lost her way, she weeps.
Her soul is a child in the darkness

Frightened of shape or of sound.
Wherefore we pray Thee, Osiris,
Grant that our prayers upon earth
May shine, may shine as a lamp,
As a lamp in the night of her soul !

Mourners. Let not her heart be stolen :
Receive her spirit, O God.

Nef. (*Approaching the statue of Osiris. The
mourners prostrate themselves.*)

Lord supreme of Suns and Worlds, O Fire beyond the
Veil,

Thou whom we have called Osiris,—hail !

One that we have loved is fled,
Phantom-like and frail,

Far from all the friendly mirth, all the lovely shapes, of
earth,

Down the sombre regions of the dead.

Wherefore, like the fragrant rings
Wafted where the censer swings

May our thoughts go forth and find her on their unimpeded
wings ;

Yea, and if our prayers avail,
When her heart within the scale
Balances the Feather,

Lord of life across whose Hand
Generations run like sand,

Great Osiris, we beseech Thee crying all together

Let there not be found therein
Any weight of sin.

*Nef. and the
Mourners in
unison*

Great Osiris, we beseech Thee crying here
together,

Let there not be found therein
Any weight of sin.

- Nef.* Now unto thee, O spirit,
 We turn who dwell upon earth :
 We have given thee all
 That the world may give.
 We have made the way fair for thy feet,
 We have lighted the path.
- Mourners.* Thy body have we filled with precious
 ointment,
 With spices, with bitumen, with gums.
- Nef.* And that which was taken from thy body
 We have sealed in the jars of the gods.
 The Gods of the North and the South,
 Of the West and the East,
 Have care of it now forever—
- The Mourners in three groups* Qebhsennuf, God of the West,—
 Tuamutef, God of the South,—
 And the Gods of the North and the East,
 Mestha and Hāpi.
- Nef.* We have caused the scribes to grave
 On a hundred scarabs
 Words of Power to support
 Thy heart in its journey.
- A Mourner.* We have brought for thee ivory charms,
- Another.* We have placed on thy bosom a prayer,
- A third.* And under thy neck and thy feet
 Images carven of gold.
- Nef.* Let me approach, O mourners ; make me a
 path !

Lo, with the wand of a priest I open thy
lips,
I touch thy mouth, O spirit,
I touch thy mouth,
And now shall thy tongue be loosened,
Thy speech be fair,
In the Hall of Double Judgment
Heard of the Gods.

Mourners. He opens thy mouth, O spirit, he gives
thee the power of speech.

*Nef. (turning
round to them.)* Declare me the deeds of Osiris :
The hour of her judgment is nigh.

A Priest. Her life was pure as the lotus
Torn from the waves of the Nile.

Nef. Who is it then that has left us ?
Who is it then that we mourn ?

Priest. This was a priestess, a maiden ;
She dwelled in the temple of Khons.

Nef. Pure and a Priestess, a maiden ;
How did she come upon death ?

Priest. By sorcery, yea by the burning
Of wax in the form of her likeness,
By the merciless will of another
Striking her soul.

Nef. Declare me her name : pronounce it,
The name of her soul upon earth.

Priest. Out of my lips will I utter,
O priest, the name of her spirit.

This was the form of Nes-hathor,
Nes-hathor her name in the world.

(A pause.)

Nef. Master, what can I do? . . . Oh she
is dead.

Kh. (Coming forward with the intention of mastering the
situation. The mourners who were awaiting the end
of the ritual are now excitedly murmuring and
questioning one another. A few half-rise: the rest
remain as if petrified.)

Peace Nēfer-heb-f: it is too late for tears.

Nef. Nes-hathor, come again to me. Come
back!

Kh. Cry not again. You know not what you do!
Peace Nēfer-heb-f, and you, you mourners,
peace.

Nef. Rise up and break your bands! Nes-hathor,
come!

Kh. Hush, I command you. She is gone too
far.

(The mourners are startled into silence by the voice
of the old Sēer from the darkness.)

The Sēer
(slowly.) Let there be silence here. Let all be
still.

(A pause, a tingling silence.)

The spirit of Nes-hathor stands at last
In the Hall of Double Judgment. Give
her peace!

(He sinks back into his vision.)

SCENE II.

If it were not for a soft light in the centre background, burning behind an iridescent veil, the scene would be quite dark. Slowly the darkness dissolves, and the light begins to discover the forms of the ten Gods ranged upon their thrones in two semi-circles that leave an open passage between them to the centre of the light.

This is the Hall of Double Judgment and the Gods are strange, many of them possessing human bodies and the heads of bird or beast. And upon their heads they wear all manner of symbolical shapes.

There are pillars on either side of the scene, curiously decorated, and a small much-painted door gives entry from the left. Each of the Gods and Goddesses has in the right hand the symbol of everlasting life, the Ankh. After a little, and faintly like an echo, is heard the end of the former scene,—faintly because the world of men is now very far away.

The voice of Nē- Rise up and break your bands ! Nes-hathor,
fer-heb-f. come !

The voice of Hush, I command you. She is gone too
Khñēmu-en-hāt. far.

(A silence : then the confused murmuring of the Mourners.)

The Voice of Let there be silence here : let all be still.
the Sëer.

(The door is here opened. The god Anubis appears, leading by the hand the soul of Nes-hathor, the Priestess.)

The voice of The spirit of Nes-hathor stands at last
the Sëer. In the Hall of Double Judgment. Give
her peace !

Anubis. Now to those Mighty Ones who judge the
dead
Here on their thrones eternal, and to Him
That Silent God who dwells beyond the
Veil,
I, Anubis, Messenger of the Gods,
Cry out All Hail !

*The Gods, in
unison.*

Hail!

Ambis.

Lo, from the dreadful pitch-dark Under-
world

I bring a pilgrim soul, a little child
Who lived in Egypt's many-lilied land
Where the sun burns most fiercely, where
men move

Nearest of all men to the world of Gods.

Nes-hathor.

O giant Powers, I greet You ; I kneel down ;
I bow before You ; I prostrate myself.

The Gods.

Speak, then, your name.

Nes-hathor.

The name that I received
From Tēta-Khart, my mother, that by
which

They called me in the temple where I lived,—
Nes-hathor.

The Gods.

Hail, Nes-hathor. Peace ! Peace !

Nes-hathor.

O Masters of the Sun, the Moon, the Earth,
Wielders of lightning, givers of good and
ill,

What now am I, I pitiful and weak,
That I dare gaze upon You ? For the heart
Even of the Pharoah who was born of Gods,
Would tremble did he stand where I now
kneel.

Often of old with music and with prayer
I bowed before those images men made,
But now that I behold Your living Selves
I have no tongue for praise. Yet most of
all

I bend my head before the Silent God,
The spirit within all spirit and every shape,

From Whom the suns in heaven have life,
that One
Called in the world Osiris.

Anubis.

You say well,
For as the rays of light are we to Him.
But now rise up, Nes-hathor. Kneel no
more,
Rise up and render here to the listening
Gods
The story of your life.

Thoth.

I am the Scribe
Among the Gods. The Book of all the
Deeds
Done in the world of men I have prepared :
I have made ready all the papyrus-rolls :
The black and the red colours have I set
forth
And the reed-pens for writing.

Anubis.

Go then !

The Gods.

Speak !

Nes-hathor.

My soul is cloudy still. I cannot think, . . .
And I am frightened.

Anubis.

You have come through death.

Nes-hathor.

What have I, then, to say ? For all that life
In Egypt has been covered and smoothed
out
By the long journey hither. I am so dazed.
Yet I remember. . . Surely it must have
been,
Oh surely, more than a thousand years ago
That I was tossing, stricken through with
pains

And in a flaming fever, on my couch ?
I am so well now, and my hand so cool !
Why, it was in the temple, and ah yes
Now I remember that there came to me
And wrapped me round with fingers like
the wind,
A sudden dewy softness, a cool peace.
It must have been my death ! For when I
woke
Alone and in the utter dark, I found
How far the world had drifted, and I cried
In vain for my sweet mother. Is it true
That this was death ? How long have I
been dead ?
What years and years ?

Anubis.

Ten days ago you died,
And in the noisy world which you have left
It is the month of Mecheir.

Nes-hathor.

Can it be
That I have still some beauty then ? I feel
So worn and very old, for I have come
By gloomy rivers and a sunless land
Blacker than deepest night, and as I came
The monsters of the Underworld approached
(Ah, but their eyes!), and would have stolen
my heart
Had not this amulet here between my
breasts
Put them to flight in fear. And then, oh
then
I longed for my lost body, for the sun,
For the glad warmth of Egypt and the
sound

Of chanting in the temple. Am I safe
O thou, Anubis? They were so foul, so
huge,
And I am all bewildered.

Anubis.

Have no fear
Nes-hathor. They are gone. Within this
Hall
Nothing can hurt you, nothing has power
for ill
Unless indeed at the Weighing of your
Heart
You should be found impure.

Nes-hathor.

But I still fear
Those monster creatures. They have flam-
ing eyes
And bodies ever changing size and shape,
Horrible, vast, unclean.

One of the Gods.

Child, be assured.
Here there is only peace.

Nes-hathor.

Then, then, O Gods,
I will tell to you the history of my life.
It all flows back to me but hardly seems
Like anything but those fantastic tales
My mother used to tell me when I wept.

Thoth.

Hear now, O Gods, the story of Nes-hathor,
Daughter of Khama-heru the Royal Scribe
And of his wife the Lady Tēta-Khart,
Dwellers in Egypt, yet alive.

The Gods.

We hear.

Nes-hathor.

Praise to the Gods, and to the Lord of
Heaven
Osiris, and to Mother Isis, praise !

When I Nes-hathor was a child on earth,
A little child, not more than eight years old,
My parents took me on the chosen day
To see the Pharoah passing through the
street
Up to the Sun-God's temple, since of late
His hand had smitten down the race of
Cush.
Then while we waited, caught among the
crowd,
We heard the priests approach us and go
past,
And then the people round us, one and all,
Grew hushed, leaned forward, while the
Nubian slaves
Marched with their spear-heads flashing up
the sun.
But I upon my father's shoulder perched
Looked down and saw behind me a small
shop
Full of rich wares, and in an ivory box
A little figure of Osiris, wrought
In deep blue porcelain, and it looked at me
As though the God Himself were closed in it.
Ah then I did not see the Pharoah's face,
The lions, nor the foreign dancing-girls,—
All these I had forgot, but ever more
Thought of Osiris till my heart and soul
Sickened of earthly things.

Anubis.

We listen. Speak.

Nes-hathor.

And then they took me, when a year was
gone,
To the temple of the Moon-god near the lake

And there I lived my life. At break of
morn

I sang the hymn of the Up-rising Ra,
And when the sun set over the blue Nile
Sang to the Boat of Evening. Every day
I worshipped in the temple, and at night
Would leave my body lying fast asleep
While, in a dream, I wandered through a
world

Full of soft voices whispering, but each
time

I woke within my body and then wept
Being imprisoned.

Anubis.

There in the world of men
We, moving un beholden, have discerned
Time and again how in the body's warmth,
Like one before a fire, the spirit at last
Falls into sleep. How was it then with you,
That warfare of the body against the soul?

Nes-hathor.

I was a virgin: one who dwelled apart.
I looked upon my body as a lamp
Through which the glittering of the soul
within
Might haply find a window to the world.
I had no other purpose. But one day. . .

One of the Gods.

Speak, for we listen.

Nes-hathor

Then . . and then . . oh then.

Thoth.

Say on, Nes-hathor; speak. For soon your
heart
Shall here be weighed, and if you hold
aught back
It will lie heavier than a heart of lead.
Wherefore, be warned.

Anubis.

And you yourself, O child,
If you should tell not all, would be thrust
out
Into that region where the unhappy souls
Wail for the one hour when the Sun-god's
boat
Breaks their long night. Have courage and
tell on.

Nes-hathor.

I know not what it was that made me fear,
Having no shame, and I will tell you. Then,
Just as I rounded into maidenhood,
One holiday I looked upon a priest
Young and as fair as Horus, and we loved.

(A brief pause.)

One of the Gods.

Love has an hundred shapes; and as it
roves
Like an unresting wind across that world
Which lies unseen behind the clouds of sense,
That inner world which is the souls of men,
Love changes form and hue. It is with
some
A lotus in the heart; a golden hawk
Within the souls of others; for a few
A divine hawk, and here among the Gods
Love takes the most mysterious of all
shapes—
The holy Bennu bird with star-blue wings
Covering the whole world. But in the
hearts
Of men and women ignorant or unclean
It is the serpent Sēta, fiery-tongued,
Yea 'tis a crocodile, a loathely shape
Desiring what it may devour, nought else,—
But this we call not love.

Ambis.

Thus, then, declare
Which of these many transformations love
Took in your life, Nes-hathor.

Nes-hathor.

I beheld
In all things one great soul, the soul I loved,
Osiris, the mysterious God. His breath
Was in the clouds of sunrise, and the sun
Seemed as His throne, and all the spreading
world,—
The dōm-trees, all the rivers, all the palms,—
To me was like a garden where He sat,
A palace roofed with stars. And so it came
That somehow when I looked on Nēfer-
heb-f
Among the singing priests I thought he
seemed
Like a tall statue set up for my God
And then my soul went out to him in love.
For in all shapes of beauty I discerned
The radiance of Osiris but in him,
In him more beauty than in all the world
And thus I loved him. Whether my love
was pure
How shall I tell? but I believed it pure
And more than this I know not nor can
speak.

The Gods.

Now let her heart be weighed.

Thoth.

I have prepared
The scales, and in the right one have I
placed
The holy feather. Bring to me now her
heart
That we may mete her justice.

Anubis.

Take the heart.

I place it here in the balances of Thoth.
Behold, O Gods. O Balances, be just ;
Err not a hair's weight.

Nes-hathor.
(*Leaning for-
ward.*)

Oh I am afraid,
I am afraid. I fear the Underworld,
The blackness, and the blows. Ah me, the
scales
Are trembling. I am lost !

Anubis.

They lie at poise.
The balances fall equal ; no, they bend.

Thoth.

Rejoice, O Gods and Goddesses, rejoice,
Nes-hathor's heart is pure. It is more light
Even than a feather's weight. She put no
load
Of sin upon her soul. She kept her heart
Clean in the dark and wayward world of
men,
And we the Guardians of Mankind rejoice.

One of the Gods. O little soul what is it that you seek ?
(*noting how Nes-hathor is gazing
at the Hall.*) For you have won the right, as we long since,
To cleave the Veil and on the further side
Be mingled with Osiris, the one God.

Nes-hathor.

I feel as though I had been here before,
I know not when but ah so long ago !
These painted pillars, the dim Veil, the
lamps
Glowing behind it,—You, the solemn Gods,
Upon Your thrones and I here in Your
midst,
All that I say or do,—the very scales—
It has all happened, I have known them all

Since I remember. Was I then a child?
I was so different then.

One of the Gods.

Since you were here
More than two thousand years have come
and gone.

Nes-hathor.

The Gods are everlasting, but men change.
Oh that I could but see the world once more
And hear the people chattering in the
streets!

Can it be true that still they toil and rest,
Weep, and work magic, laugh, and love,
and kill,

As when I too was with them? and my
sisters

Are they still moving about the temple-
courts

And is the old sun burning on Egypt now?
Egypt . . . how strange is life! . . .

And Nēfer-heb-f
Have I then lost you? ah but he will have
learned,—

He has come back and found that I am
gone.

He is weeping for me now: his pain is mine,
It hurts me. Oh he is crying out for me!

His soul is in a storm. I thought the world
Was done with altogether and that I

Should rend the Veil, but now I would go
back,

I would go back to him, I would go back
For I could give him comfort.

One of the Gods.

Peace! Be still!
Leave him to go his way, for you must
learn

That he is ripe for sorrow, you for joy.
Nought ever dies and there is no farewell
Throughout this all-inwoven Universe.
You have loved many times, not only once,
And shall love on forever.

Nes-hathor.

In what way?

For I have died and lost him at my death.

The God.

You have died many times, not only once.

Nes-hathor.

Shall I have eyes to see him if I go
There,—to the Silent God.

The God.

We may not tell.

Anubis.

Consider well. Though destiny be strong
Yet your desires are stronger. Choose
your way.

Nes-hathor.

I would become all spirit . . . I am
tired.

One of the Gods.

Remember, Nēfer-heb-f is now in pain
And you have loved him.

Nes-hathor.

I have loved him, yes,
But oh I loved the God. Indeed, indeed,
I think that ever since I left the sun
I have been seeking, like a child, for home,
For the divine Osiris in Whose heart
Surely the whole of love is locked, and here
I stand upon the verge.

Anubis.

And yet you long,
Nes-hathor, for the tender downward way,
The life of man, the earth, and human love.

Nes-hathor.

Oh Nēfer-heb-f, dear spirit, weep no more :
Do not cry out, if still you hear my voice.
Lift up your eyes. Can you not see me
still?

One of the Gods. Child, you are much confused. There are
two ways
That lie before you : this, to the Silent God,
Or else again to earth, for through all time
The soul is free to choose, and if you will
You may go back to life. Return, O child :
Wade through the Waters of Forgetfulness
And in some other body find a home,
For all time spreads before you.

Nes-hathor. Yet I stand
Before the Veil that hides the very Heart
Of this great Universe, the sun of life
With which I fain would mingle and be lost !
But answer me one question. Should I pass
Into Osiris, tell me—You that know—
What shall I lose ?

One of the Gods. All passion and all pain.

Nes-hathor These two are one, I cast them both aside.
Is there no more to give ?

The God. More yet, indeed.
All sad or happy memories of the world,
All cleaving to the husks of earth.

Nes-hathor. No more ?

The God. Again yet more : your love of that one soul
For that one sake.

Nes-hathor. It is too much to give.
I shall go back again.

The God. Yet one thing more ;
The hardest of all these.

Nes-hathor. What then ?

The God. Yourself.

Nes-hathor. What shall be done ? Will you not help me ?

The Gods. Choose!

Nes-hathor. I am all lost. I know not what to say.

The Gods. Choose!

Nes-hathor. Yet . . . oh Nēfer-heb-f. . .

The Gods. Nes-hathor, choose!

Nes-hathor. Farewell, sweet world! Oh Nēfer-heb-f,
farewell!

(With authority)

Open to me, O Gods, the holy Veil ;
Draw back the Veil and let me pass beyond,
For I am all aflame with my desire
To find the utter heart and goal of all,
The spirit of all spirit.

Anubis. Ere you pass
Declare the names and titles of the Gods :
Then shall we know you master of all
power.

Nes-hathor. I know Their names and all Their powers
(Moving round are mine.
the semi-circle.) Thou art the Goddess Hathor, Queen of
Youth ;
Tefnūt art Thou, and Thou art known as
Tmū ;
Men call Thee Horus, Guider of the Sun ;
And Thou art Shū, the Splendour rayed
from Rā.
Thou art the Lady Isis,—Thou art love.

Nephtys, the sister of Osiris, Thou ;
Thy name is Seb, the spirit of man's Earth,
And Thine is Nūt, the Goddess of Blue Sky,

Thou, Thou art Hū, and Sā the Judge art
Thou ;

Thee too I know, for Thou art Harmachis.

The Gods.

*(Rising and
chanting with
their faces
toward the Veil.)*

Soul of all the Universe! We the Gods
implore Thee

Let the Veil be lifted from the Splendour
of Thy Face.

Let Thine eyes look down upon the spirit
here before Thee :

Time can no more chain her, neither
Space.

Forth of Thee she passed of old and Thine
alone the fire is,

Thine the starry flame with which her
spirit burned

Upward through a million years until to
Thee Osiris

She that is Thy lover hath returned.

Nes-hathor.

My pilgrimage is ended : all desires
Are shattered but the vast desire for Thee !

Thoth.

Draw back the Veil.

Anubis.

Now, now Nes-hathor, come !

Nes-hathor.

*(standing with
wide-spread
arms.)*

O I have reached the boundaries of my
soul.

I am becoming all things. Yes, I come.

*(The Veil divides, Osiris is discovered seated upon
His throne which is raised by some steps. He is
invested with all the attributes of Osiris, but His
face and form are those of Nēfer-heb-f.)*

Nes-hathor.

O I am nothing, nothing ! Thou art all !

*Osiris (rising as
Nes-hathor
approaches.)* I am Osiris, I am the Lord of Gods :
I am the world and I am all the stars :
I am the Gods and I the Souls of men :
I dwell within the suns and in the dust,
And in that one you loved. Lo! it was Me
You sought through life on life a million
years
And in a thousand ever-varying forms,
But not until the myriad shapes of Me
Were sacrificed and shattered one by one
Could I myself be found. But you have
climbed
Beyond the fascination of all forms
And I and you are one forevermore.
I stoop to kiss you. Peace be with us!
Peace!

*



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